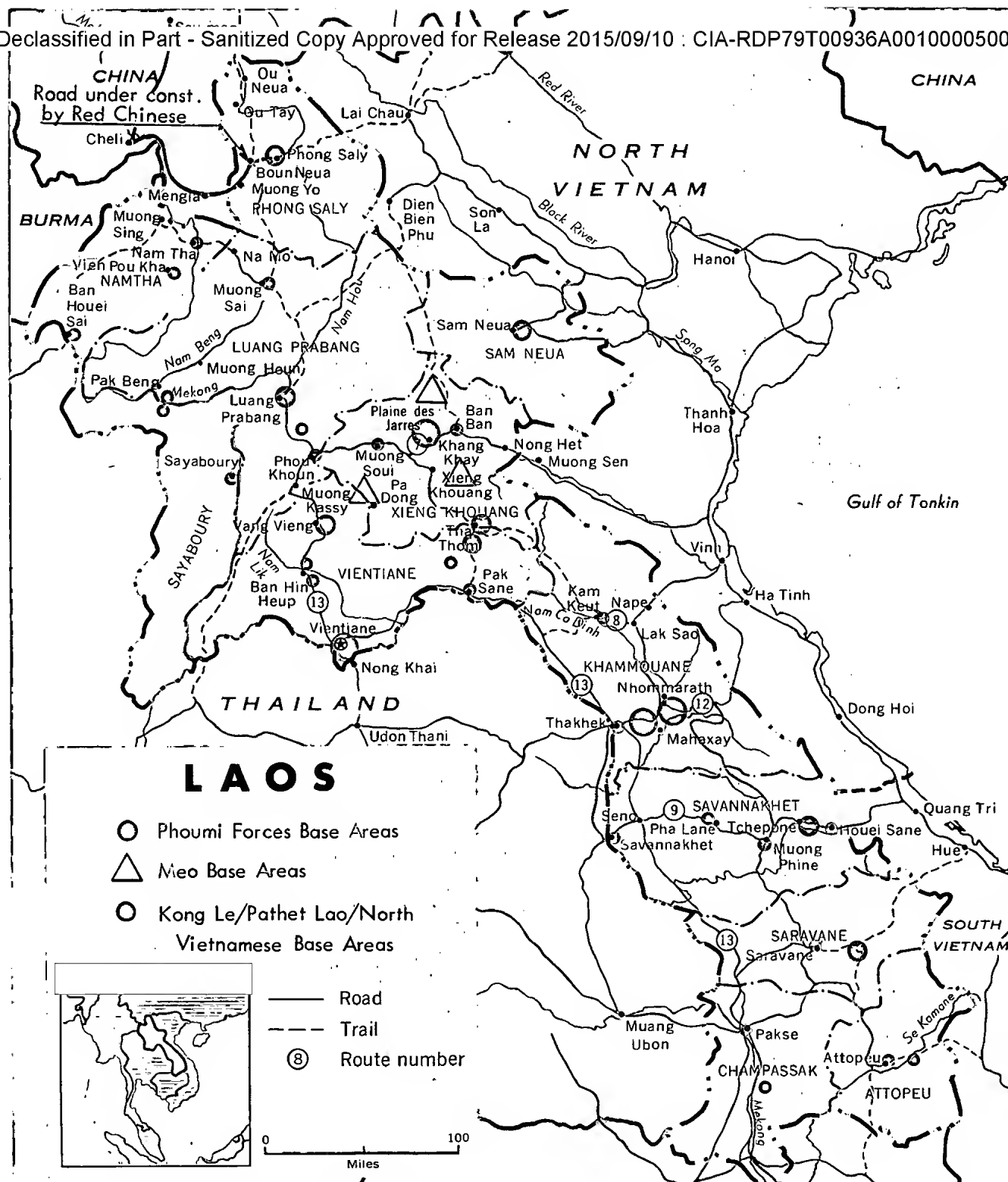


THE PRESIDENT'S INTELLIGENCE CHECKLIST

23 AUGUST 1962

~~TOP SECRET~~



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1. Laos

a. Souvanna told Ambassador Unger Wednesday evening (Vientiane time) of an apparent agreement with Souphannouvong for one ICC checkpoint at Nhommarath in the area under Pathet Lao control. A firm decision was "expected" Thursday. According to a late press report this morning, there is also to be a checkpoint on the Plaine des Jarres for "North Vietnamese laborers and technicians."

b. With respect to Nhommarath, Souphannouvong may have been delaying in order to permit North Vietnamese troops in this particular area to clear out. Six days ago, Kong Le's unit at Nhommarath reported that the North Vietnamese there would be going home on the 19th, 20th and 21st, and yesterday the unit reported that the North Vietnamese had "left the region."

[redacted]

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c. Chinese Communist activities and intentions in Phong Saly province in northern Laos are increasingly puzzling. Several days ago we had a Lao neutralist report from Phong Saly that Chinese Communist troops--from the road building group--armed with mortars and artillery were deployed at Muong Yo and Boun Neua and had built several fortified positions. Yesterday Phong Saly heard from Boun Neua that the Chinese are propagandizing that "Phong Saly and Chinese territory are one and the same" and that the people are worried. We have no confirmation of this reporting, but it is rendered by officials on the scene.

[redacted]

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d. Ambassador Unger is concerned about the effects of our present failure to respond to requests for ammunition airdrops for the Meos who are under the "strongest attack in recent months." He fears this will encourage the Communists to continue these attacks and will lead to a drop in Meo morale and to spreading defections.

2. East Germany The East German Communists appear to be trying to prevent any excuse for mob action by their own people.

a. Yesterday morning a US Military Liaison Mission vehicle was damaged in the town of Anklam, north of Berlin, apparently while its occupants were bedded down in their hotel. Soviet officers called to the scene were helpful and expressed regret.

b. Meanwhile, local East German officials sent party agitators among a crowd around the vehicle to inform them: "We do not approve of such things; we do not place ourselves in the same category as the rioters in West Berlin; we look on this as a provocation and will do everything to discover the perpetrators."

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3. Berlin

a. Our initial assessment of the abolition of the Office of the Soviet Commandant leads us to suggest that: Khrushchev sees little chance now for further Western concessions and is concerned mainly with strengthening his position for signing a treaty; some move to subject civilian--but probably not Allied military--air access to East German control may be in the offing; we may see new requirements for entry into East Berlin.

b. So far, there has been no immediate practical effect on Allied military access and movements. Our military vehicles entered East Berlin this morning without difficulty.

c. Presumably Ulbricht was in on the Soviet decision, but at the moment he remains a bit of a mystery. Flights by his usual aircraft suggest that he returned to East Germany on Monday, but we have heard very little of or from him since he went to the USSR on 1 August. We may soon hear from him.

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4. Cuba

a. Most of our information from within Cuba on the influx of Soviet equipment and technicians has come from Cuban sources. We now have several reports from the British Embassy whose people have been out looking.

b. They have spotted at least one camp southwest of Havana, where the number of vehicles suggested the presence of "many" more than the 200 presumed young Russians they did see, and where a radio antenna field had already been erected. This they think could be connected with radio monitoring.

c. Their information on the equipment coming in--some "hard", some not--leads them to suggest that "an expert might consider the possibility of anti-aircraft rockets and radar."

d. Our people in Miami tell us that Miro Cardona, President of the Cuban Revolutionary Council, who is coming here today to see the Attorney General and the State Department, is also going to consult with Latin American ambassadors concerning "Soviet troops" in Cuba. According to a Miami news broadcast he is going to request help to repel this "invasion."

USIB WATCH COMMITTEE CONCLUSIONS -- 22 August 1962

No Sino-Soviet Bloc country intends to initiate direct military action in the immediate future.

West Berlin popular reaction to developments at the Wall creates a potentially dangerous situation. However, during the past week we have noted no unusual Soviet or East German military activity related to the Berlin situation. The Soviets have continued to assert a desire for further diplomatic negotiations on Berlin but have taken additional measures designed to erode the four-power occupation status of the city.

The buildup of Viet Cong regular forces in South Vietnam and recent reports of the concentration of battalion-size Viet Cong elements to the north of Saigon and in the central plateau area may point to early large-scale simultaneous strikes against South Vietnamese military and civilian targets in widely separated areas.

The Communists' continuing refusal to permit effective inspection of their areas in Laos raises grave doubts that they intend to fulfill the Geneva agreements in good faith and suggests an intention to retain some Vietnamese forces in Laos.

NOTE: In its more detailed review, the Watch Committee also noted the possibility that some moves may be planned against Western air access to Berlin. It cited the recent construction of ECM sites near West Berlin airports, orders to East German propagandists to refer to the air corridors as "air routes of the DDR used by the Western Powers," and the recent Soviet protests over Western flights in the Berlin zone. The Committee had insufficient evidence to arrive at any sense of timing.

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NOTES

- A. South Vietnam 180 Viet Cong codebooks were captured a few days ago. This haul may assist our cryptanalysts with their knotty problem, and at the least may cause some confusion among Viet Cong commands while they change their communications after their loss is discovered.
- B. Indonesia Djakarta [redacted] is trying to re-negotiate the schedule of payments for aid projects, that "Indonesia will re-[redacted]"
- C. Algeria The Political Bureau, much concerned about complaints by Europeans and Moslem "personages" over property requisitions and "extortions" by the ALN, has issued a general directive that all Algerians, particularly the ALN, "must respect the dignity of Europeans who consent to live among us and perform the tasks that await them." [redacted]
- D. Israel-Syria Although Syrians have been firing on Israelis at three points along their border since Monday, we have so far seen no signs of Israeli preparations for reprisals. Should there be casualties, however, it might be a different story. There is some possibility the Syrians may only be trying to gain credit as good Arabs, with the Arab League now meeting in Beirut.

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DOCUMENT OF INTEREST

- I. Situation and mood within West Berlin as of yesterday noon

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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE